THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) As a result of the dismantling of the Administered Pricing Mechanism in the petroleum sector effective 1st April 2002, it has been decided to phase out the subsidy on PDS kerosene and domestic LPG in the next three to five years.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Allotment of LPG agencies and petrol pumps

†600. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of LPG and Petrol Pump agencies allotted in various States of the country during the last three years district-wise; and

(b) the targets fixed for the fresh allotment of LPG agencies and petrol pumps in various States of the country during 2001-2002?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies have allotted 1018 LPG distributorships and 915 Retail Outlets in various States of the country during the last three years.

(b) Allotment of LPG agencies and Retail Outlets is a continuous process and it is not possible to indicate a fixed target for the fresh allotment of LPG agencies and Retail Outlets during a particular year.

Guidelines on selection of dealers

601. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of retail outlets for petroleum products in the country as on date, State-wise;

(b) whether Government have introduced a revised set of guidelines for selection of such dealers;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the total number of retail outlets allotted during the last three financial years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) As on 1.10.2001, there were 18401 retail outlets (petrol pumps) operating in the country.

(b) and (c) With a view to streamlining the procedure for selection of dealers/ distributors of petroleum products by the DSBs, new guidelines were formulated and issued to the Oil Companies on 9.10.2000. The guidelines *inter alia* prescribe a uniform, transparent procedure for selection of dealers/distributors.

The locations for setting up dealerships/distributorships included in the Marketing Plans are advertised by the Oil Companies inviting applications from eligible candidates. After the scrutiny of the applications, the eligible candidates are interviewed by the DSBs for selection on merit. The following criteria have been prescribed for assessing the inter-se merit of the candidates:—

(i) Personality, Business ability and salesmanship.

(ii) Capability to arrange finances.

(iii) Educational qualification and general level of intelligence.

(iv) Capability to provide infrastructure and facilities (land, godown, showroom, etc.)

(v) General assessment.

As per the guidelines, reservation of dealerships/distributorships for different sections of the society will be as under:—

(1) Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (SCs/STs)	—	25%
(2) Physically Handicapped Persons (PH)	—	5%
(3) Paramilitary/Police/Govt. Personnel (PMP)	—	8%
(4) Defence Personnel	—	8%
(5) Freedom Fighters (FF)	—	2%
(6) Outstanding Sportspersons (OSP)	—	2%
(7) Open (O)	—	50%

33% of the dealerships/distributorships in each of the above categories will be reserved for women in that category.

(d) During the last three years i.e., from 1998-99 to 2000-2001, 915 retail outlets were allotted by the oil marketing companies.

LPG connections in Andhra Pradesh

602. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of LPG connections and kerosene outlets given by oil companies in Andhra Pradesh during the last two years, 2000 and 2001;

(b) the target set up for the year 2002; and

(c) the steps being taken to achieve the target?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have released about 16 lakh and 9 lakh LPG connections in the State of Andhra Pradesh during the year 2000 and 2001 respectively. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) has allotted only one SKO-LDO dealership in the State of Andhra Pradesh during the year 2001. Other OMCs have not allotted any SKO-LDO dealership during the last two years in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

(b) and (c) The allotment of SKO-LDO dealerships is a continuous process and no fixed target has been set up for such allotment for the year 2002. However, the LPG connections are available on demand in all the existing markets throughout the country including the State of Andhra Pradesh.

National Gas Reserves in Western Coast

†603. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are quite active in exploration of natural gas;

(b) if so, whether there are signs of natural gas reserves on the Western Coast of the country;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.